



Universiteit
Leiden

Languages of Citizenship. Conceptions of Politics and Discursive Strategies in Petitions to Dutch Parliamentary Assemblies, 1796-1940

Applicants

Eligible proposals must have at least two applicants from Humanities, preferably from two different institutes.

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|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. dr. Maartje Janse | Institute for History |
| 2. dr. Joris Oddens | Institute for History |
| 3. dr. Anne Petterson | Institute for History |
| 4. prof. dr. Ton van Haften | Centre for Linguistics |

Project description

In the past decade scholarly interest in the history of petitioning has greatly increased.¹ Political historians have shifted their attention from political institutions to citizens' attempts to make their voices heard, and to the *interaction* between citizens and political institutions.² Because of their serial character and wide availability, petitions are ideal historical sources to look at 1) citizens' conceptions of political institutions and 2) their own citizenship; and 3) the discursive strategies and linguistic registers employed by citizens in their communication with authorities. The aim of this project is to study these aspects in order to test whether the conventional textbook view of sharp fluctuations in citizens' humbleness and assertiveness throughout the long nineteenth century holds up to scrutiny when it is confronted with a long-term, bottom-up perspective.

This project sets out for a training program that makes students intricately familiar with collecting and analyzing archival data, combining methods used in history and discourse studies. The Research Trainees will help creating a database that will be made publicly available to build on for further research. The database will contain information on 500 petitions sent to Dutch parliamentary assemblies (Batavian

¹ See for references to the recent literature on petitioning the following publications by supervisors 1 and 2: Joris Oddens, 'The Greatest Right of Them All: The Debate on the Right to Petition in the Netherlands from the Dutch Republic to the Kingdom (c. 1750-1830)', *European History Quarterly* 47.4 (2017) 634-656; Maartje Janse, "'What Value Can We Attach to All These Petitions'" Mass Petitions in the Netherlands, 19th c., *Social Science History*, forthcoming; Joris Oddens, 'Verzoekschriften aan het Bataafse parlement. Een terreinverkenning', in: Joris Oddens et al. (eds.) *Het volk spreekt. Jaarboek voor Parlementaire Geschiedenis* (2017) forthcoming; Maartje Janse, 'Omstreden petities. Het volkspetitionnement en het probleem van politieke legitimiteit, 1828-1878', in Oddens et al. (eds.), *Het volk spreekt*.

² See for this perspective for instance the Leiden research projects *The Persistence of Civic Identities in the Netherlands, 1747-1848* and *The Promise of Organization. Political Associations 1820-1890*, in which supervisors 1 and 2 respectively participate. This perspective is also the aim of the book series *Palgrave Studies in Political History*, recently set up by supervisor 1 with Henk te Velde, the BA3 seminar *Mondige Burgers. Petities in Nederland van Smeekschift tot Burgerinitiatief*, taught by supervisor 2 during the academic year 2016/2017, and the new research proposal (NWO Rubicon) and BA3 seminar *Toegang tot de politiek. Nederland 1870-1930* taught during the academic year 2017/2018 by supervisor 3. Supervisors 1 and 2 are also project partners in the AHRC research network grant proposal *Petitions and Petitioning From Medieval Times to the Present*, currently under review.

National Assembly and Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal) in the period 1796-1940: 50 randomly selected petitions for 10 sample years. The database will hold the following data:

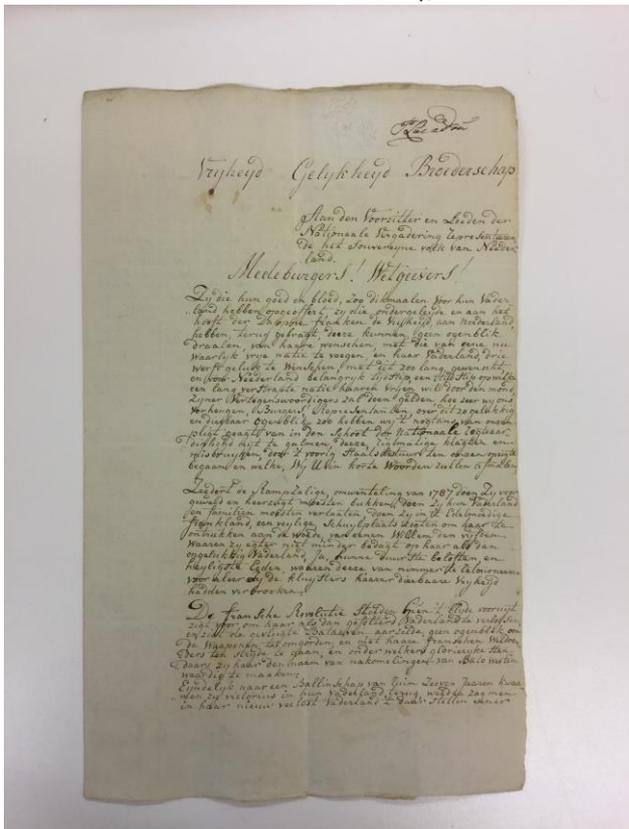
Basic information

- Date
- Place
- Topic
- Name(s) of petitioner(s)
- Number of signatories
- Self-written or written by scribe

Discursive strategies

- How does/do the petitioner(s) refer to him/her/themselves?
- How does/do the petitioner(s) relate to the parliamentary assembly they are addressing?
- What is the degree of 'humbleness' of the petition?
- Which (types of) persuasive strategies / arguments are employed?

Petition to the National Assembly, 1796



Research Trainee Profile

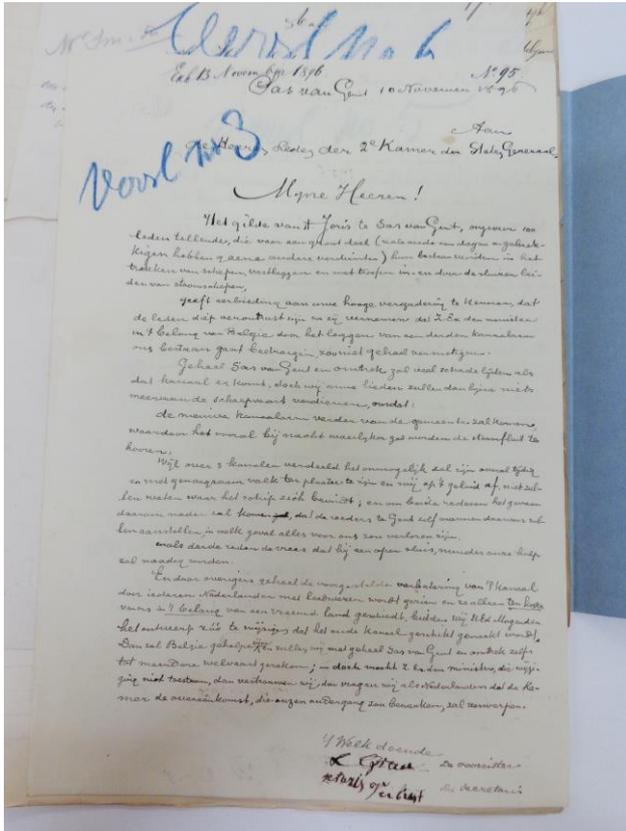
The Research Trainees will conduct archival research in the National Archives; enter their data into a database; assist in organizing a one-day seminar; present their research at the seminar; and write (depending on the level and the needs of the trainees) a detailed outline for a thesis, research proposal, or journal article.

This research traineeship is intended for talented and motivated students with a strong interest in the history of the Netherlands and/or discourse studies. Both BA students with the ambition to do a ResMa in Leiden and ResMa students who started their degree in September 2017 are eligible to apply. Applicants should preferably have proven experience with reading eighteenth and/or nineteenth-century written Dutch sources. Preliminary knowledge of petitioning research or discourse studies is desired but not required.

Collaboration

This project builds on an existing collaboration between the Dutch History chair group of the Institute for History and the Dutch Discourse Studies chair group of the Centre for Linguistics, but it establishes new links between scholars and covers new ground. Whereas the collaboration has so far focused on public rhetoric and political debate (most notably in the interdisciplinary MA trajectory 'The Political Debate: History and Rhetoric') this project starts from a shared research interest that has recently developed at the Dutch History section and that is concerned with the history of ordinary citizens' interactions with authorities. The use of rhetorical models and persuasive strategies in petitionary writing has received some

Petition to the Tweede Kamer, 1896



attention from historians.³ However, existing historical scholarship of this type lacks rigor and would benefit from collaboration with discourse studies specialists. Conversely, everyday rhetoric as it is used by non-elite language users has not often been historicized. The historians involved in this project, who are experts on the late eighteenth, early nineteenth, and late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries respectively, are extremely well situated to facilitate such an undertaking for the long period between 1795 and 1940, because they are familiar with the archival material and have the historical background knowledge needed to contextualize and interpret references made by the petitioners, together with the research trainees.

We will also collaborate with the National Archives in The Hague (Paul Brood and Arjan Poelwijk). The NA is currently considering to prioritize the digitization of collections of petitions (which the applicants would greatly benefit from); this pilot project serves to give the NA an idea of the opportunities this would create. The NA will also develop a new permanent exhibition for educational purposes over

the course of 2018. This exhibition focuses on identity and citizenship among ordinary people; we will provide the NA with examples.

Deliverables

- Research database, to be deposited in DANS
- Interdisciplinary Symposium (1 day), October 2018, Institute for History, Leiden, or NA, The Hague, with presentations by experts in history, discourse studies, and historical pragmatics
- Presentation of the database by the research trainees at the Symposium
- Presentation of paper by the supervisors at the Symposium
- Article in peer-reviewed journal (e.g. *Dutch Crossing*, *Continuity and Change*, or *Parliaments, Estates, and Representation*), co-authored by supervisors
- Providing examples for the permanent exhibition in the National Archives
- For supervisor 1 this pilot project will offer insights that can be incorporated in the VIDI project 'Politics for everybody? The Spread of the Inclusive Repertoire, 1820-1865' (under review); or for a similar application for the NWO Vrije Competitie. For supervisor 2 this pilot project will constitute

³ Maarten Van Ginderachter, 'Jean Prolo, waer bestu bleven? Speuren naar bronnen van "gewone mensen" in 19de-eeuwse archieven', *Verslagen & Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 114.1 (2004) 19-31; Thomas Sokoll, 'Writing for Relief: Rhetoric in English Pauper Letters, 1800-1834', in: Andreas Gestrich, Steven King and Raphael Lutz (eds.), *Being Poor in Modern Europe: Historical Perspectives 1800-1940* (Oxford 2006); Andreas Würzler, 'Existenzielle Not oder Menschenrecht? Argumente in Bittschriften während der Helvetischen Republik (1798-1803)', in: Silvia Arlettaz et al. (eds.), *Menschenrechte und moderne Verfassung. Die Schweiz im Übergang vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Geneva 2012) 297-314.

an important building block for a VIDI application, to be submitted in October 2018. For supervisor 3 this pilot will offer the basis for writing a VENI application, to be submitted in January 2019.

Planning

January-February:

- Read and discuss relevant literature on historical context and method
- Expert meeting with supervisors, research trainees and Leiden experts on political history and discourse studies to discuss method and database structure
- Archival research in National Archives The Hague: select and digitize source material
- Start organizing Symposium

March-July:

- Read and discuss relevant literature
- Work on database
- Continue organizing Symposium
- Work on Presentations for Symposium
- Work on outline for thesis, proposal, or article (trainees)
- Start working on peer reviewed article (supervisors)

Student Application

For further information please contact dr. Joris Oddens (j.oddens@hum.leidenuniv.nl) or dr. Maartje Janse (m.j.janse@hum.leidenuniv.nl).

Applications should include the following documents, in one PDF file:

- Motivation letter (Dutch for BA-level, English for ResMa level)
- Academic CV
- Full list of grades